

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks. Of claims 1-10 and 12-33 that were pending in the application, claims 1-3, 5-7, 9, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 21 were rejected in the Office Action. By way of this amendment, Applicants have: (a) cancelled 1 and 12, without prejudice or disclaimer; and (b) amended claims 2-6, 8, 10, 14-19, and 21. Accordingly, claims 2-10 and 13-33 remain pending for further consideration.

1. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants greatly appreciate the allowance of claims 13 and 23-33 and the positive indication of allowable subject matter in claims 4, 8, 10, 16, 19, 20, and 22. In response to this positive indication, claims 4, 8, 10, 16, and 19 (*i.e.*, the claim from which claims 20 and 22 depend) have been amended to be in independent claim format. Accordingly, claims 4, 8, 10, 16, 19, 20, and 22 should be in condition for allowance.

2. Rejection of Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 21

Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the Examiner rejected: (a) claims 1-3, 6, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15, 18, and 21 as allegedly being obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,314,710 (“Kamoshita”); and (b) claims 5 and 17 as allegedly being obvious when considering Kamoshita in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,020,531 (“Ahrens”). Preliminarily, these rejections are now moot with respect to claims 1 and 12, which have been canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer. Similarly, these rejections are also now moot with respect to claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 21, as claims 14, 15, 17, and 18 have been amended to depend from allowable claim 4, as claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9, have been amended to depend (directly or indirectly) from allowed claim 13, and as claim 21 has been amended to depend from allowable claim 19. Accordingly, as the rejections are now moot, a withdrawal of these rejections is both warranted and respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

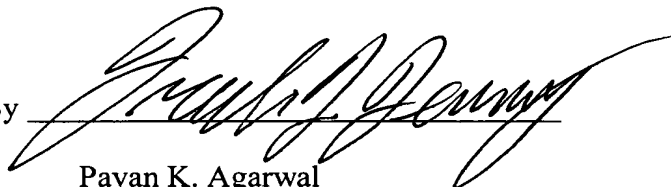
For the aforementioned reasons, claims 2-10 and 13-33 are now in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if such communication would expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date

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By



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THE COMMISSIONER IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE ANY ADDITIONAL FEES WHICH MAY BE REQUIRED REGARDING THIS APPLICATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, OR CREDIT ANY OVERPAYMENT, TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. SHOULD NO PROPER PAYMENT BE ENCLOSED HERewith, AS BY A CHECK BEING IN THE WRONG AMOUNT, UNSIGNED, POST-DATED, OTHERWISE IMPROPER OR INFORMAL OR EVEN ENTIRELY MISSING, THE COMMISSIONER IS AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE THE UNPAID AMOUNT TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. IF ANY EXTENSIONS OF TIME ARE NEEDED FOR TIMELY ACCEPTANCE OF PAPERS SUBMITTED HERewith, APPLICANT HEREBY PETITIONS FOR SUCH EXTENSION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 AND AUTHORIZES PAYMENT OF ANY SUCH EXTENSIONS FEES TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741.